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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/577,301	04/28/2006	Yoshinori Seko	1422-0715PUS1	4790

2292 7590 01/23/2009
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EXAMINER

KRAUSE, ANDREW E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1794

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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01/23/2009

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

mailroom@bskb.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/577,301	Applicant(s) SEKO ET AL.	
	Examiner ANDREW KRAUSE	Art Unit 1794	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/28/06, 7/28/06, 3/5/2007, 7/19/2007</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: “A thickening composition characterized in that the thickening composition comprises...” should be changed to “A thickening composition comprising...” Appropriate correction is required.
2. Claim 2 is objected to because of the following informalities: “characterized in that...” should be changed to “wherein...” Appropriate correction is required.
3. Claim 3 is objected to because of the following informalities: “characterized in that...” should be changed to “wherein...” Appropriate correction is required.
4. Claim 4 is objected to because of the following informalities: “characterized in that...” should be changed to “wherein...”. Appropriate correction is required.
5. Claim 4 is objected to because of the following informalities: “as defined in claim 1” in lines 2-3 is redundant given that the claim already refers back to claim 1. Appropriate correction is required.

Art Unit: 1794

6. Claim 5 objected to because of the following informalities: “Foodstuff characterized in that...” should be changed to “Foodstuff comprising...”.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this

Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

8. **Claims 1-4** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Takenawa et al, (translation of JP PN 10204408).

9. **Regarding claim 1**, Takenawa discloses a thickening composition comprising xanthan gum to which a potassium salt is added to improve the water dispersion (Detailed description of the invention, [0003]–[0006]).

Although Takenawa does not explicitly disclose that the potassium salt is attached to the powder surface of the xanthan gum, it is clear that the potassium salt will inherently attach when the powders are mixed ([0006]) and in the time following the addition of the potassium salt/xanthan gum to the water before complete dispersion is achieved.

Art Unit: 1794

10. **Regarding claim 2**, Takenawa discloses a product meeting the limitations of claim 1, though by a different process than that claimed in claim 2. "Even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985). Further, "although produced by a different process, the burden shifts to applicant to come forward with evidence establishing an unobvious difference between the claimed product and the prior art product", *In re Marosi*, 710 F.2d 798, 802, 218 USPQ 289, 292 (Fed. Cir. 1983). See MPEP 2113.

11. **Regarding claim 3**, Takenawa discloses the composition of either claim 1 or claim 2, and further discloses that the potassium salt is added to the xanthan gum in amount of 0.5 to 10 parts by weight ([0007]).

12. **Regarding claim 4**, Takenawa discloses the product of claim 1, and since it has the same composition, it will have the same properties. Further, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably

Art Unit: 1794

distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

13. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

14. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

15. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary.

Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the

Art Unit: 1794

inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

16. **Claim 5** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takenawa et al, (translation of JP PN 10204408) in view of Marrs et al. (US #5,633,030) .

17. Takenawa discloses the thickening composition of claim 1, but fails to disclose incorporating it in a foodstuff.

18. However, Marrs discloses that xanthan compositions are frequently incorporated into food products (column 2, lines 5-9). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the xanthan compound of Takenawa into a food product, since the ability of xanthan to give a high viscosity product in aqueous solutions is often exploited in the food industry, for example to stabilize emulsions (Marrs, Column 2, lines 5-9).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ANDREW KRAUSE whose telephone number is (571)270-7094. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-5.

Art Unit: 1794

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Callie Shosho can be reached on (571)272-1123. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/ANDREW KRAUSE/
Examiner, Art Unit 1794

/Callie E. Shosho/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1794